

SITUATION REPORT NO. 2
INCIDENT NO. 2005-121
DATE: October 6, 2005 Time: 7:00 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** **Severe Winter Storm** – A record-breaking early winter storm with heavy snow, rain and high winds moved through portions of North Dakota on October 5, 2005, disrupting power supplies and stranding motorists.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** No deaths or injuries have been reported.
3. **DAMAGES:** Officials from 14 Rural Electric Cooperatives (RECs) reported more than 4,000 North Dakotans remain without power as of October 6, 2005. RECs workers anticipate power restoration efforts could take up to three days. Personnel from the N.D. Department of Emergency Services' (DES) Division of Homeland Security conducted an assessment with RECs to determine how many areas remain without power.

North Dakotans without power are using generators; others are sheltering with family or friends. Additionally, shelters have been opened in Egeland in Towner County and in Minot in Ward County. Division of Homeland Security staff contacted emergency managers in the impacted areas to assure that all citizen needs are being met.

The forecast for the evening of October 6, issued by the Grand Forks Office of the National Weather Service (NWS), calls for a widespread frost or freeze that is expected to effectively end this year's growing season. These conditions are forecasted to impact areas along and south of Roseau to Grand Forks to the Cooperstown line as lows drop into the 20s. The freeze warning does not include areas from Devils Lake to Hallock and Langdon.

Record-setting early winter storm conditions on October 5 were followed on October 6 with warmer temperatures and clear to partly cloudy conditions. The forecast for the next four days calls for a slow warm up of temperatures, which could rise to 65 degrees by October 10. The warning coordination meteorologist for the Bismarck Office of the NWS reported flood-related problems due to

snowmelt are not expected. Water content in the snow measured 1.5 to 2.5 inches.

The NWS reported the heaviest band of snowfall on October 5 extended from Bowman to the Dickinson-Richardton areas through Halliday and into the Minot area. Following is a summary of snow accumulations: 15 inches in Bowman, Minot and Richardton; and 14 inches in McClusky, Trotter and Grassy Butte.

The State Operations Center (SOC) received the following reports of storm activity from local and tribal emergency managers:

Bottineau County

The Emergency Manager reported the county received up to 12 inches of snow during October 5 and 6. County roads have been cleared for travel, but many are still snow covered. Many roads have only one lane of travel. North Central Electric has restored power to 40 to 45 percent of the county. The Bottineau County Court House closed on October 5 because of lack of power. Additionally, the generator failed to work properly. Power has since been restored to the Court House and a contractor will repair the generator.

Bowman County

An electrical transformer in Rhame has failed, leaving the city without power. Rural roads remain clogged with snow but crews are attempting to clear them. All main roads have been plowed.

Golden Valley

State Radio reported the Sentinel Butte tower remains out of service.

McHenry County

Crews were working to restore phone and power in rural areas. By the afternoon of October 6, power had been restored to most cities. Power restoration in rural areas may take until October 8. Storm damages included toppled trees and snapped, broken power lines and cross arms. The city of Upham was temporarily without water due to a pump failure. Repairs have been made and service has been restored. Public works crews are clearing roads of snow and debris.

Morton County

State Radio dispatchers reported that a mail delivery truck driver, stalled 10 miles west of New Salem, notified the Highway Patrol late October 5 that he had adequate fuel until morning.

Oliver County

The western portion of the county remains without power after storm conditions downed approximately 40 power poles, toppled trees and clogged roads with snow.

Ramsey County

The Devils Lake Law Enforcement Center notified State Radio some areas are without power. Approximately 1,500 residents of the Spirit Lake Nation were

temporarily without power. Officials from the Fort Totten Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) notified State Radio that power has since been restored.

Rolette County

Service has been restored to State Radio's Belcourt tower; however, sheriff's deputies report there are some areas still without power.

Sheridan County

The Emergency Manager reported numerous downed trees and power lines and snowfall of six or more inches. Power was interrupted intermittently in the cities and longer in the rural areas. Rural electric cooperatives are working to restore power in the rural areas. Some areas have been without power from October 5 to October 6.

Three Affiliated Tribes

N.D. Department of Transportation (NDDOT) employees are assisting with a request to clear N.D. Highways 8 and 200 west of Beulah, north to Twin Buttes. Tribal officials are moving generators into the area to fuel plows needed to clear roadways for power companies. Twin Buttes is the only community without power.

Ward County

Officials reported Excel Energy hoped to restore power to the northwest portion of Minot the afternoon of October 6, which has been without service for the last 24 hours.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: Agencies monitoring conditions include local and tribal dispatch centers, law enforcement, maintenance crews, public works, emergency management officials and rural electric cooperatives.

STATE: Agencies monitoring conditions include the Governor's Office, N.D. National Guard (NDNG), N.D. Highway Patrol (NDHP), N.D. Department of Transportation (NDDOT), Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI), the N.D. Department of Health, the N.D. Department of Human Services (DHS) and the N.D. Department of Emergency Services' Divisions of State Radio and Homeland Security.

FEDERAL: The NWS has been issuing periodic weather reports, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has been monitoring reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: Three Affiliated Tribe ranchers are assisting with snow removal efforts.

Churches in Bowman County sheltered stranded motorists during the evening of October 5.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: Gov. John Hoeven on October 6 sent NDNG troops to Dickinson with chain saws, front end loaders and other heavy equipment to help clear right of ways for emergency vehicles in the wake of the October 5 severe snowstorm. Hoeven also asked the NDDOT to allocate snow removal equipment that had been diverted from the eastern part of the state last night to help clear roads and evacuate stranded motorists.

Search and rescue efforts to locate a missing McKenzie Electrical Cooperative crew member ended successfully early October 6 when he was found safe at a rural Killdeer area farmstead in Dunn County. The crew member had ventured out on snowmobile the previous day to investigate an outage. Local and state law enforcement and volunteers launched a search when attempts to contact the crew member failed. NDNG OH-58 and UH 60 (Blackhawk) helicopter crews were enroute early October 6 to assist with the effort when the REC employee was found. The aerial resources were then diverted to a second search and rescue mission for an elderly Mott man. That search was called off when he contacted family members that he was safe in Dickinson.

Personnel from the NDHP and the NDNG successfully located a motorist stranded south of Richardton along N.D. Highway 8 at 11:00 p.m., October 5.

The N.D. Department of Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Section Chief reported power has been restored to five hospitals that were impacted by storm conditions. The hospitals resorted to generators after their power supplies were disrupted.

Road crews from the NDDOT began at 5:00 a.m., October 6 to clear snow from highways. By evening, major highways, including I-94 from Mandan to the North Dakota-Montana state line and U.S. Highway 83 from Max to Minot, were reopened. The Road Report indicated scattered ice and wet conditions with reduced traffic speeds.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: County officials reported that it appears there are sufficient personnel and equipment resources to assist with snow removal.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No additional outside help has been requested.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Homeland Security's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/des>.

Susan Reinertson, Director
N.D. Division of Homeland Security